EGBERT;

OR, THE

VICTIM OF CREDULITY.

AN ORIGINAL TALE.

EMBELLISHED WITH NEW ENGRAVINGS.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY J. LEE, HALF MOON STREET,
BISHOPSGATE WITHOUT.

Price Two Pence.

FRONTISPIECE.

With grateful Heart poor Yanco see;
He's torn from Bondage, and is free.

Egbert releasing his faithful Negro, from Slavery, previous to his return to England.

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CHILDREN'S BOOK
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J. Lee, Printer, Half Moon Street, Bishopsgate,
London.

EGBERT;

OR, THE

VICTIM OF CREDULITY:

IN the reign of George the first, king of England, there lived an old and happy couple in the western part of the country: they never had any children: It, however, so happened that they, for a time, adopted the son of a neighbouring peasant: the father of this youth had received a liberal education from the curate of the parish wherein he resided, intending him for mercan-

tile, not agricultural, pursuits ; but the death of his patron compelled him to pursue the former, which he did with alacrity, benefiting himself and giving infinite satisfaction to his employer, insomuch that in a few years he realized sufficient to rent a neat little farm, and lived thereon with content and happiness for several years, beloved by all his neighbours and respected by the different gentry in the adjacent villages.

But amidst this favorable prospect circumstances occurred, that marred his future prospects : a person, with whom he had been many years in habits of intimacy, visiting

and being visited, called on him one evening very late: the unseasonable hour rather surprised Egbert, who enquired the cause, and learned that his friend was in trouble, he being, as he stated, liable to an artest for double the amount he owed ---Egbert became indignant at the wretch who should thus dare so unjustly to persecute his friend, and voluntarily declared he would come forward as bail, and that Sliander should appeal to the laws of his country.

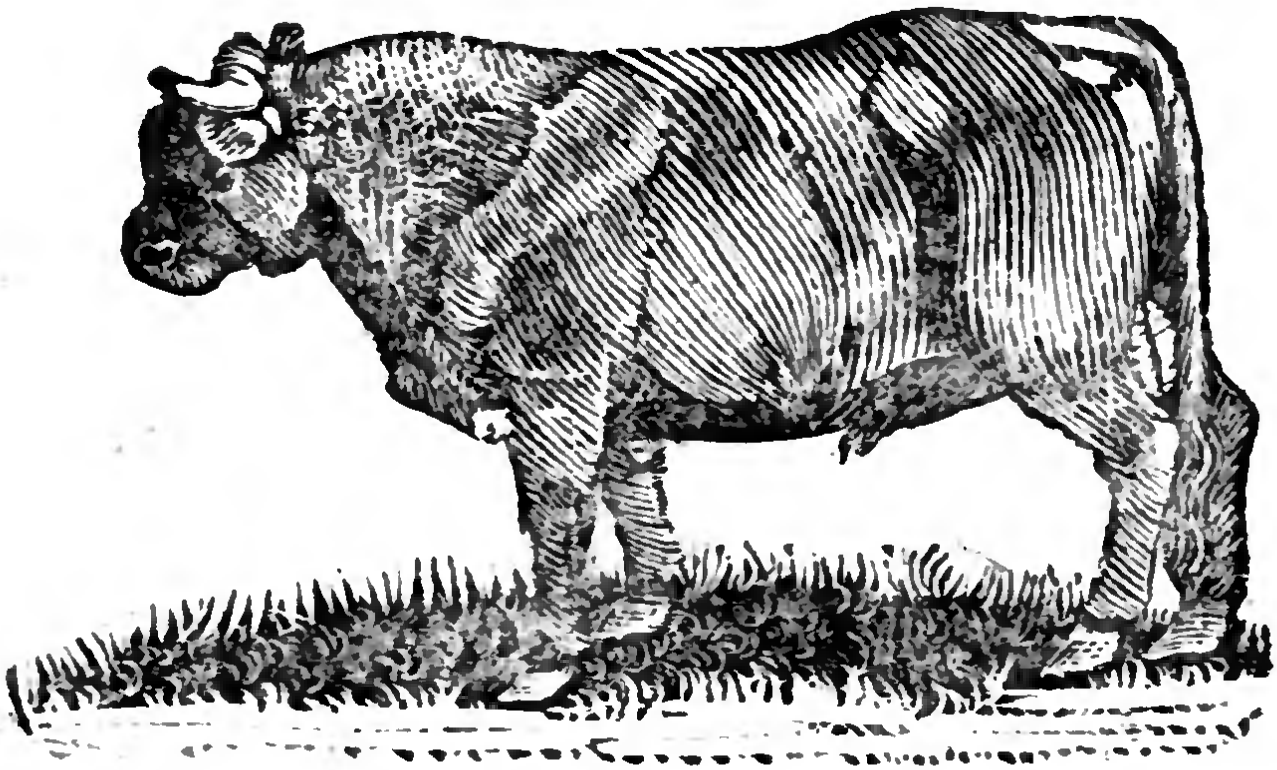
The honest heart of Egbert knew no design---frankness was his characteristic; he never made use of an artifice whereby any person might

sustain an injury, neither was he suspicious of those frauds that mankind too often practise on each other; and, probably, if he had been more cautious and circumspect he would not have become a victim of credulity, as the sequel in this tale manifests.

The next day Egbert accompanied his friend to the attorney's, and entered into the usual recognizances; when they went from thence, they adjourned to an adjoining public house for refreshment, where his friend made protestations of eternal gratitude, calling on heaven to bear witness to the same.

Soon after they mutually parted, and returned to their respective homes---Egbert inwardly rejoicing at having an opportunity of manifesting his friendship.

When he entered his house, a sad spectacle lay to his view---it was his affectionate wife, the partner of his cares, who had been dreadfully gored by a mischievous



bull, as she passed over a meadow from the dairy---the village doctor was there, but her unfortunate state baffled all his skill; her death, he knew, was inevitable, and therefore prescribedaccordingly, leaving an injunction that silence should prevail. His mandate was obeyed, and

Egbert alone sat up with his dying partner. The emotions of his heart on this awful occasion are better felt than described, and sorrow gave vent to tears, which copiously bedewed his cheeks, and had never made there a channel since the death of his patron, whose loss he sorely felt and deplored, but was nothing to the dread of losing for ever the object of his affections.

The unhappy woman, midst her excruciating torture, took a little repose, occasiond by the draught sent for that purpose; but awoke with such agonizing shrieks which would have pierced the heart of the most obdurate savage--she lin-

gered a few hours, and, commending her soul to the tribunal of heaven, poured forth her pious ejaculations for the eternal happiness of her affectionate husband, and the future welfare of her darling and only son. She then sunk on the pillow, and, without a sigh or groan, her soul was wafted to that place from whence no traveller returns.

Egbert, who but a few hours before considered himself the happiest of men, was now the most miserable---he was fallen from the summit of happiness to the abyss of grief and despair---his neighbours consoled him, and each in their turn offered their services, for which he

kindly thanked them, but, rejecting their offers, observed, 'I thank you---I may probably, at a future period, want your assistance,' as if he anticipated that other misfortunes might befall him.

The presence of his little son in some measure alleviated his distress of mind; the child's engaging tricks often allured him from the thoughts of those happy hours he had so often witnessed, previous to the late unfortunate event, which could not be easily erased from the mind.

The Sunday following the remains of his beloved wife were deposited in the village church yard, and a vast concourse from the sur-

rounding villages attended on this solemn occasion: the funeral ceremony being decently performed, an excellent discourse on the uncertainty of human life. It seems that the rector had that day come down

to catechize the children, and hear-
of the circumstance, availed himself
of this opportunity of admonishing
his flock, and calling their attention
to a serious and devout life, and
earnestly impressing on their minds
the necessity of performing those
duties necessary for the salvation of

a human being and as a Christian, whose doctrine is faith, charity, and humilty.

After this excellent exhortation, a psalm suitable for the occasion was delivered out by the clerk, the organist having previously struck

up the dead march in Saul. Each raised their voice in praise of their Creator, and many who had not been at church for years, soon became its constant attendants.

The mind of Egbert was yet desponding, he could not summon fortitude sufficient to pursue his usual avocations; he became careless and negligent, which afforded those who were evil-minded an opportunity of taking an advantage.

The term was now arrived when he should bring forward his friend; but what was his surprise, when he found the villain had decamped to another clime, and taken with him the whole of his disposable proper-

to? Thus situated, Egbert was between madness and despair, and nothing but the fear of offending heaven prevented him from committing some rash act on himself.

The heavy demand made on him on account of his false friend, added to some other losses, considerably deranged his affairs, therefore he was compelled to convene his creditors together---those who before professed the greatest friendship were now his most inveterate enemies, using every epithet that could inflame the honest mind.

No longer able to brook their insults, he became roused from his lethargy, and in pointed terms ac-

cused the most violent of them of ingratitude: they became more violent, and were for hurrying him away to a prison, had it not been for others whose hearts were less calous. Those who so strenuously defended him he was not unmindful of, particularly the old couple before-mentioned: to them, he assigned the cottage; to others, his tools of husbandry; and to those whom he thought stood in need, some trifling sums, reserving a residue for the exigencies of his situation.

He communicated his intentions of quitting the country to old Hubert and his wife, intending to take a voyage or two to the Levant, in

the empire of the Turkish dominions, having a particular acquaintance in that trade, and now a merchant of eminence in London: to this the good old couple readily acquiessed, and at the same time promised every attentionshould be paid to his son, until his return, which promise they religiously fulfilled.

He arose early in the morning, kissed his son while asleep, and bedewed his cheeks with the tears of affection; the old couple offered up their supplications for his safety and prosperity: he then departed.

The stage arrived at London in the evening, when he waited on his old school-fellow, who cordially received him.

Having taken some refreshment, Egbert immediately made his circumstances known; his friend however sympathized him, and promised assistance: Egbert rejoiced at his goodness, and once more beheld the sunshine of prosperity.

It so happened that the mer-

chant was about sending one of his vessels to Turkey, and accordingly appointed Egbert to fill a vacant situation in his factory at that place; and in a few days received the necessary instructions, his friend shaking hands and taking a last farewell.

With a fair wind Egbert arrived at the distant haven, and took upon him the office he was delegated to fulfil: at first he was looked on with indifference by those under his direction; but his affable manner soon won their esteem.

When he had been there some time, his employer wrote to him expressing his satisfaction, insomuch

that in a short time after admitted him into a share of that concern. He remitted different sums of money to Hubert, towards the education and maintenance of his son, not forgetting his bounty towards him. He remained at the factory several years, till the news arrived of the death of his friend, who, in his will, bequeathed him a handsome sum, enabling him with pleasure to return to his native country, where he discharged those incumbrances arising from his misfortunes, and never after became a Victim of Credulity.

Lee, Printer, Half-Moon-st. Bishopsgate.